

RMC DEBATE TEAM TAKES FIRST PLACE IN HAWAII TOURNEY

SIDEBAR: RMC debaters will argue Obama-McCain Oct. 30; Staw vote to follow

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BILLINGS – They humorously call themselves Rocky Mountain College’s “Babblin’ Bears,” but it was anything but babble when the RMC debate team won first place at a forensics tournament in Hawaii last week, according to Shelby Jo Long-Hammond, RMC assistant professor of communications studies and the debate team coach.

“Our team, of senior Alison Reidmohr and junior Katie Berst, was impressive. They beat some major competition winning first place,” said Long-Hammond.

Among other colleges participating at the Pan Pacific Debate Championship, hosted by Hawaii Pacific University on October 17 and 18, were Loyola Marymount University, Portland State University, Reed University, California State University San Bernardino, Linfield College, University of Hawaii as well as Hawaii Pacific University.

“Altogether, there were 13 colleges from across the U.S. represented and we were definitely the David among Goliaths,” Long-Hammond said.

In the final round, Reidmohr and Berst toppled the teams from Northwest University, Claremont Colleges, and Loyola Marymount.

In this new form of debate, called British Parliamentary World Style’s, there are two government teams that affirmed and two opposition teams that opposed resolutions on topics that included: the financial bailout, organ donation, ocean resources, NATO expansion, women’s groups in peace negotiations, Zimbabwe, and the Israeli – Palestinian conflict. The topic for each round was announced to each team fifteen minutes before the

round began. Each student in the round is required to speak for seven minutes.

In the final debate round, Reidmohr and Berst opposed the position that “NATO should arm Israel to defend itself from Palestine,” which was a challenging perspective, Long-Hammond explained.

“We are very excited with our performance and that RMC is becoming recognized in the national and international debate circuit,” said Long-Hammond, a former national champion debater from Carroll College.

This is the third successful outing for the RMC squad in recent weeks. They beat Long-Hammond’s alma mater at a tournament held Sept. 25-28 in Kirkland, Wash. The weekend before the Hawaii trip, the RMC debate team brought back a third place trophy from the 15-school debate competition at Casper College, in Casper, Wyo. The team of Dan Johnson and Allison Corbyn defeated yet another Carroll College team in their semifinal debate.

Venturing into the unknown world of British Parliamentary Debate or “World’s Style Debate,” Reidmohr, Berst and junior Allison Corbyn traveled with Long-Hammond, to Kirkland to learn the finer points of this new style of debate.

The weekend began with a public debate in which Berst and Reidmohr debated Nik Griffith and Amy McNulty from Carroll College. The showcase debate was done in traditional National Parliamentary Debate style. This form of debate is what both colleges have engaged in for the past several years, according to Long-Hammond.

The resolution to be debated was “A young president is better than an old president.” Carroll College, arguing in affirmation of the resolution, presented reasons for why Democrat presidential candidate Barack Obama would be the best president for the United States. Berst and Reidmohr argued in the negative, demonstrating through tax policies that Republican candidate John McCain would be the better-suited candidate for today’s economy.

“It’s always a pleasure to debate Nik and Amy because I know that they will put forward an intelligent case and we will always walk away friends, ” said Reidmohr.

At the end of the debate, the audience, through applause, chose Rocky Mountain the winner.

This showcase was then followed by two more expiation debates, intended to demonstrate “World’s Style Debate” Students from California, Oregon, Washington and Montana participated in classes and mock rounds to practice this style of debate.

“It was a nice tune up for Hawaii, and for future debate tourneys,” Long-Hammond said.

SIDEBAR:

The Rocky Mountain College debate team will hold a mock presidential debate Thursday, Oct. 30, 2008, in Losekamp Hall on the RMC campus. The debate will feature advocates for Democratic presidential candidate Barack Obama and Republican presidential candidate John McCain.

The debate will begin at 7 p.m. and is free and open to the public.

Following the debate there will be a straw vote on the presidential candidates.